

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claim 15, claims 16 to 28 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgement of the claim for foreign priority and the indication that certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter included in claims 17 and 18. In this regard, the Examiner will note that each of claims 17 and 18 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of its respective base claim and any intervening claims. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 17 and 18 are in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 16, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 25 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 17, and claims 21, 24 and 26 to 28 now ultimately depend from claim 17. As such, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejection of Claims 15 to 16 and 19 to 28 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

As regards the rejection of claims 15 to 16 and 19 to 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), while Applicants do not necessarily agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 15 has been canceled herein without prejudice, claims 16, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 25 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 17, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, and claims 21, 24 and 26 to 28 now ultimately depend from claim 17. As such, it is respectfully submitted that the present rejection is moot, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested..

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: August 2, 2007

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